

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraphs beginning on page 11, line 31 and ending on page 14, line 2, with the following amended paragraphs:

To perform a mailing transaction, the user will interact with a communication means which is mounted on the outer housing. A more preferred communication means is a display means, most preferably a computer monitor (110) equipped with a touch-sensitive screen with which the user interacts to input requested information for processing a mail item. The screen may be a conventional touch-screen activated by infra-ray, sonic waves, or resistance screen. While the operation of the present inventive mailing system will be described with reference to the touch-screen activated computer monitor (110), which is the most preferred type, other types of communication means are contemplated within the scope of the present invention, and thus may be employed. For example, a conventional computer monitor may be employed that is coupled with an alphanumeric key pad or keyboard. In this latter embodiment, the user inputs information into the mailing system via the key pad or key board. ~~Alternatively, the, communication means may be a voice activated system, such as a digitized voice recognition system for receiving user input, such as that manufactured by Dragon Systems, for example, whereby the mailing system, via the software and computer (1308), operates in response to the user's spoken commands.~~ In this third another embodiment, the communication means may utilize a display means such as a computer monitor for providing instructional information visually to a user, or it may provide such information to a user by an audio means such as a digitized voice system, for example.

To initiate a mailing transaction, the user approaches the mailing system (100, 101) and touches the screen to cause the screen, ~~or a digitized voice recognition system through microphone (112),~~ and/or video instruction on touch-screen (110) to be activated which will in turn instruct the user to perform the next step in the operation. Following the flow diagrams illustrated in Figs. 11A-11B, 12A-12B, 13A-13B, 14A-14B, 15, 16A-16B, 17A-17B, and 18, the user selects a language for conducting the transaction, such as English or Spanish, for example. The user is then requested to enter a means for payment, most preferably user identification information for the purpose of payment, preferably by swiping or inserting a user

identification data entry means such as a magnetic credit/debit card, through or into a magnetic card reader (122). Alternatively, the user could be instructed to input a user identification code, such as a personal identification number (PIN) and/or an account number, for example, via the touch-screen or a key pad/keyboard mechanism, for example. It is contemplated that the inventive system could be modified by one of skill in the art, having the benefit of the invention's teachings and suggestions, to accept payment in the form of cash (i.e. coins and/or bills) after the total charge has been determined. Once the computer (1308) identifies the correct information from the credit/debit card, for example, it will transmit this information via a modem (1262) and telephone line (1264) (Fig. 6C) to an external credit/debit authorization center. Once the authorization is obtained, the software program will automatically activate the next screen which will request the user to make a selection between various services offered through the commercial carrier. The software flow diagrams illustrated in Figs. 11A-11B, 12A-12B, 13A-13B, 14A-14B, 15, 16A-16B, 17A-17B, and 18 depict services offered by the U.S.P.S.; however, the computer system may be programmed with additional and/or different mailing services unique to other commercial carriers (e.g. Federal Express Two-Day and Overnight). The remaining descriptions of the operation of the inventive mailing system, including the figures contained herein, will be for a mailing system designed for shipping by the United States Postal Service (Fig. 1A, for example) or the United Parcel Service (Fig. 1B, for example).

Please replace the paragraphs beginning on page 25, line 32 and ending on page 27, line 25, with the following amended paragraphs:

As discussed above, to perform a mailing transaction, the user will interact with a communication means which is mounted on the outer housing. A more preferred communication means is a display means, most preferably a computer monitor (110) equipped with a touch-sensitive screen with which the user interacts to input requested information for processing a mail item. The screen may be a conventional touch-screen activated by infra-ray, sonic waves, or resistance screen. While the operation of the present inventive mailing system will be described with reference to the touch-screen activated computer monitor, which is the most

preferred type, other types of communication means are contemplated within the scope of the present invention may be employed. For example, a conventional computer monitor may be employed that is coupled with an alphanumeric key pad or keyboard. In this latter embodiment, the user inputs information into the mailing system via the key pad or key board. ~~Alternatively, the communication means may be a voice activated system, such as a digitized voice recognition system for receiving user input, such as that manufactured by Dragon Systems, for example, whereby the mailing system, via the software and computer (1308), operates in response to a user's spoken commands.~~ In this third another embodiment, the communication means may utilize a display means such as computer monitor for providing instructional information visually to a user or it may provide such information to a user by an audio means, such as a digitized voice system, for example.

To initiate a mailing transaction, the user approaches the mailing system and touches the screen to cause the screen, ~~a digitized voice recognition system through microphone (112),~~ and/or video instruction on a touch-screen (110), to be activated which will in turn instruct the user to perform the next step in the operation. Following the flow diagrams illustrated in Figs. 11A-11B, 12A-12B, 13A-13B, 14A-14B, 15, 16A-16B, 17A-17B, and 18, the user selects a language for conducting the transaction, such as English or Spanish, for example. The user is then requested to enter a means for payment, most preferably user identification information for the purpose of payment, preferably by swiping or inserting a user identification data entry means such as a magnetic credit/debit card, through or into a magnetic card reader (122). Alternatively, the user could be instructed to input a user identification code, such as a personal identification number (PIN) and/or an account number, for example, via the touch-screen or a key pad/keyboard mechanism, for example. As discussed above, it is also contemplated that the inventive system could be modified by one skilled in the art, having the benefit of the invention's teachings and suggestions, to accept payment in the form of cash (i.e. coins and/or bills) after the charge has been determined. Once the computer (1308) identifies the correct information from the credit/debit card, for example, it will transmit this information via a modem (1262) and telephone line (1264) (Fig. 6C) to an external credit/debit

authorization center. Once the authorization is obtained, the software program will automatically activate the next screen which will request the user to make a selection between various services offered through the commercial carrier.

Please cancel the current Abstract and replace it with the following amended Abstract, set forth below on a separate sheet: